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New buses are the pride of INL Bus Operations

New buses carry more passengers; they also get 10 to 20 percent better mileage than the older INL buses

They're big and white, and they glide through the night – and the daytime, too, for that matter.

INL's six new leased model D4505 passenger buses, brilliant white with dark tinted windows, are a stark contrast with the bulk of the laboratory's 100-bus fleet, which display bright yellow paint and stainless steel panels to the world.

But the biggest difference isn't the color scheme. It's the whole vehicle.

"The new buses are part of an effort to refurbish our fleet," said Scott Lyman, INL manager of Bus Operations. "The INL fleet has an average vehicle age of more than 20 years. And our new buses, from stem to stern, incorporate modern technology and design."

Made by Motor Coach Industries, each bus holds 55 passengers, a step up from the 44-passenger capacity of INL's older passenger buses. Matching industry standards, they have video monitors capable of playing videotapes or DVDs.

From a fleet perspective, the improved mileage is a big plus. Averaging 6.5 to 7 miles per gallon of fuel, the new buses are 10 to 20 percent more fuel-efficient than the average INL bus. Plus, they're designed to burn biodiesel fuel. These recent improvements are just one of many ways that INL strives to implement measures that protect the environment by reducing emissions and our dependence on fossil fuels.

"We are proud of these beautiful new buses," said Cal Ozaki, INL Operations and Maintenance director, who oversees Fleet Operations workers and activities at a higher level. "But we are especially proud of our drivers, dispatchers and mechanics. Their efforts have allowed Bus Operations to avoid seriously injuring a single passenger over the past 57 years of operation." INL's 91 drivers, five dispatchers and six bus mechanics are responsible for maintaining bus operations on 81 weekly routes. The INL Bus Operations team safely logs nearly 3.5 million miles each year.

Two of the new buses are on routes to the Naval Reactors Facility. The remaining four are on INL (Battelle Energy Alliance) routes. Fleet Operations is hopeful the modernization of INL's bus fleet will continue.

INL Bus Operations currently operate 100 passenger buses to ferry workers to and from their Site work locations including service to INL and the Idaho Cleanup Project (both at multiple locations) and Bechtel-Bettis (at NRF). Over 2,000 employees are safely transported from their home communities of Mackay, Arco, Pocatello, Blackfoot, Idaho Falls, Rigby and Rexburg to INL work locations at the Materials & Fuels Complex, Central Facilities Area, Radioactive Waste Management Complex, Reactor Technology Complex, Idaho Nuclear Engineering and Technology Center, Naval Reactors Facility, Test Area North and Specific Manufacturing Capability throughout the week. Bus Operations also supports all aspects of transportation on the INL site including tours, conferences, legislative and congressional visitors, as well as community leaders, forums and visits by various INL stakeholders.

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